

## **STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS COUNTY OF NEWPORT**

The Town Council of the Town of Tiverton, County and State aforesaid held a Joint Workshop with the School Committee and the Budget Committee on Wednesday, the 14th day of January 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the Tiverton High School Library, 100 North Brayton Road.

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councilor President deMedeiros, Vice-President Chabot, Councilor Lambert, Councilor Mello, Councilor Pelletier and Councilor Perry                      Councilor Sousa was absent

Town Administrator and Town Treasurer were also present.

### **1. Call To Order**

Council President deMedeiros called the Council portion to order with a roll call.

School Committee Chair Sally Black called the meeting to order for School Committee with the pledge of allegiance to the flag and roll call. All were present.

B/C - Present - Laura Epke, Nancy Driggs, Donna Cook, Deborah Janick, Cecil Leonard

B/C - Absent – Madeline O'Dell, Josh Mello, Louise Durfee, Alex Cote, Joseph Bento and John Souza

### **Discussion on Fiscal Year 2015/2016 Budget with School Committee and Budget Committee**

Town Administrator Matt Wojcik began his comments on recommended budget. Expenses increased on municipal side 2.06%. This does not include revenue, just expenses. First year debt service on library bond budget nets 216,460. Total around 500K with subsidy through state library services. That represents 1% of the increase. Felt important to explain debt service for entire Town falls on municipal side; absorbs new debt service as financial matter, some difficulties financing library at this time. Uncomfortable reducing operational or postponing capital needs due to increase in debt service; struggled to make cuts. Currently undergoing negotiations with both safety unions. Neither is competitive with neighboring communities. HSA has helped sustain increases in health care. Point of comparison, in Swansea a police Lt. makes more than chief in Tiverton. We go through training and they can walk away with better base salary on lower level in other communities. Put 150K aside in Council future needs without playing hand as to where will go such as terms of salaries or longevity, etc. Fire consolidation and creation of day staff fire marshal position. Making progress in negotiations to reduce pressure in overtime account. Trying to restructure department. Other highlights, did not recommend fully funding library request. Absorbing debt service and this year request 585K to last year 490K, represents 95K increase. Recognize may have operational challenges but no other department even close to 1% increase. Couple other issues, on the state level benefiting from pension reform that exists. If state loses lawsuit would be in trouble. Pension rates actually down, stabilizing moves that will help us get through year.

B/C Laura Epke questioned which unions were on the state plans. Administrator responded MERS, IAFF and Police. Teamsters not on state. Recommended reducing contribution on police from 800K to 700K. Not taken lightly. Past year fund emerged from critical status and investments improved with better market. Did not accept DPW Director request for money set aside for landfill closure. Have worked for State and spent lot of time working on landfill problems. Very ridged, matter with controversy and disputed ways to finance. Went with B/C decision last year. Capital side looking for ambulance, one rescue reaching safety point terms of mileage of 141K miles and equipment failures occurring. Same with street sweeper. Asked for 2 police cruisers and back hoe. When referring to capital look toward town ordinances.

B/C Laura Epke questioned if Library has actually gone to bond. Administrator responded bonds have been issued. Epke also questioned if Council has discussed their priorities. Town Clerk informed not yet, will be having workshop on Saturday. Councilor Perry questioned the analysis done prior year on the landfill closure. B/C Laura Epke made the spreadsheet and will search and distribute. Part of discussions Council should question where stands now, interest rates, etc.

Councilor Lambert sent request to Pare Engineering on closing timeframe. Separate assignment they were charged to put together a plan for closure and to plan to the dollar. Problem is Town has not been following the plan; now need to make up for the 168K have not budgeted for past two years. Do not think will get any leeway from DEM. Told us need to close back in 1994 and we had 16 years to come up with a plan for closure and that was set by Pare and DEM.

Councilor Perry added without PAYT would be further behind. When on Budget Committee agreed did not fund 2 years but did fund through PAYT. Councilor Lambert informed estimate for WasteZero is included in Pare Engineering estimate. Discussion followed.

Superintendent Rearick, straight forward 1% increase of \$306,687. Capital 268K will use from carry forward balance. Recommended in budget all-day kindergarten. Reduced 5 full time teacher positions. Salary only 1.1%. Healthcare decreased overall by 76K even with 8% built in. Only significant increase unemployment for teachers laying off.

S/C Deb Pallasch funded some new positions by reallocating. Only new initiative all day K. Superintendent Rearick on cost of \$268,670 for capital all from facilities study report indicating high priority. School Committee still needs to review recommendations of subcommittee. Take safety and priorities first. When done will submit application to RIDE for some reimbursement. Need to meet again with B/C and T/C sometime during the year since several items cannot afford. Totals around 6/7 million and are all health and safety issues. 90% of dollars for health and safety.

B/C Laura Epke questioned if facility study done. Superintendent responded had four meetings, then made recommendations from report to Committee as to priority. Committee had to vote whether agree or not. Committee will agree to prioritize then will submit to RIDE for reimbursement on some safety and health items. B/C Laura Epke essentially facility study told what's broken, almost breaking and what last 5 years.

Superintendent Rearick confirmed recommendations one to 5 years. S/C Deb Pallasch have set aside part of fund balance reserve for these expenses. Rearick added the septic system is completed at a cost of 780K; all done and paid for.

Relative to negotiations. Superintendent Rearick is negotiating all union which are expiring June 30, 2015. Town Administrator Wojcik confirmed IBPO and IAFF this year.

B/C Nancy Driggs noted the FTR vote last year and taxpayer salaries that have not gone up; questioned any consideration to keep increase to 0. S/C Deb Pallasch replied, already lowest paid teachers in State similar to police and fire. Train and they leave for other jobs. Hard to compete. Mr. Rearick added employees across the board have not received increases and the teachers have not had any increase in 4 years, longest.

B/C Laura Epke opined the problem is costly to train then leave for other communities paying more. Town Administrator worked in private sector; if don't realize gains year to year people get fired. Municipal Corp if tax base fundamentally stable and don't grow and not adding new even modest increases. Know how hard increase for people on social security. End of day stand on forms of

development. No commercial tax base or impotence to increase residential tax base. End up spiraling. Important to note land conservation and open space take large areas of land which creates pressure on what remains. S/C Deb Pallasch challenged since undeveloped land can be savings, depends on use. If uses Town resource can increase cost net loss.

Mr. Wojcik stated lives in Cumberland and had same population as Tiverton, now 35,000. Still need to identify how to balance long term expenditures versus ability to pay. Need to find growth can agree on and then not hesitate.

B/C Laura Epke added expects the Council will address on Saturday workshop discussions. Would like to see workshop of revenue early rather than later in cycle. Pay lot of attention to expenditures and remember revenues late. More eyes looking at revenue, the better it is. Administrator added Treasurer sent revenue to departments already and requested they review and get back. Administrator will spend a lot time looking cell tower leases, lot effort looking at recreation and opportunity to be net positive. S/C Deb Pallasch added people get excited too soon on the percent of increases. B/C Laura Epke added last year had increase expenses and pulled from general fund reserve. Opined like winning the lottery; this year no lottery so increase already increase in tax rate. Whatever increase here on top of last year's proposed increase. People make decisions but unfortunate have library bond and other expenses and will add to tax rate.

Town Clerk replied to questions on schedule of FTR. Third Saturday May 16, final budgets to B/C by 3/14 and any additional proposals for FTR by S/C, T/C by 4/10 then any petitioner proposals. Usually have printed dockets by middle of April. All set by Charter. Added audit is complete and will be on the January agenda.

Administrator stated presentation will look similar to past but has looked at each and every line item and provided a 5 yr history math, current to date. Will be a few weeks before complete document. Quality more important early stage firm handle on electricity and fuel purchases.

Councilor Perry attended School Committee meeting and they had locked in good price for electric. Questioned if same as Town's rate. Administrator replied timing everything. Town contract up and next 3 years reflect price pressure debated at state level. Rate will be at 9.545 but standing is close to 14. Some benefit through City and Towns League. S/C Deb Pallasch agreed timing everything but added School Committee also locked in good rate on oil.

Being no further discussion all Boards adjourned.

Budget Committee and School Committee adjourned.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Councilor Pelletier motioned, seconded by Councilor Perry to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

**A True Copy.**

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Nancy L. Mello, Town Clerk